



THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2018

REAL REPUBLIC PROPOSES REAL REFORMS

Meetings in Townsville today (Thursday) will be start of a process to give Australians a chance to have their say on proposals for a republic with a directly elected Head of State and other real reforms to the Constitution.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia group, David Muir, said the two Townsville meetings were an opportunity for people from all walks of life to drop in and hear proposals for Constitutional change and contribute their own ideas.

“We wanted to kick-start our planned series of local meetings in regional Australia and in Townsville because an Australian republic is not an issue for the so-called inner-city elites,” Mr Muir said.

“We believe the real reforms we are putting on the table will deliver real benefits to Australians wherever they live and work, and we also want to tap any other ideas people may put forward.

“Australians want real reforms not empty symbolism, and that means a directly elected Australian as our nation’s Head of State, not one chosen for them by politicians.

“The Real Republic wants to go further and give a directly elected Head of State a role in appointing and overseeing anti-corruption and integrity bodies at the federal level instead of the current unhealthy practice of politicians appointing the agencies and individuals overseeing their behaviour.”

Mr Muir said a referendum on Australia becoming a republic should also include questions for other Constitutional changes delivering real reforms including:

- recognition of Indigenous Australians,
- changes to the Senate including fewer Senators for each state,
- synchronised elections for the lower and upper houses of Federal Parliament and four-year terms,
- applying to the House of Representatives the casual vacancy system now used by the Senate to cut costs by avoiding by-elections, and
- local government recognition to remove any doubt about the validity of direct federal funding.

Mr Muir said the 1999 referendum that followed the 1998 Constitutional Convention failed because Australians wanted to pick their Head of State, but the November 1999 referendum offered only a politicians’ version of a republic.

The Real Republic was founded after the 1998 Constitutional Convention held in Canberra by delegates including:

- the late Dr Clem Jones AO former Lord Mayor of Brisbane,
- Ann Bunnell former Deputy Mayor of Townsville in Queensland,
- Brisbane lawyer David Muir, also chair of the Clem Jones Trust
- Ted Mack former mayor of North Sydney and independent MP in both the NSW and Federal parliaments, and
- Phil Cleary former independent federal MP for the Victorian seat of Wills.

Mr Muir said the Real Republic organisation continued to be supported by the Clem Jones Group and reflected the former Lord Mayor’s belief in serving people at the grassroots level and his belief in the importance of regional communities.



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